



Rochester International Association

<http://www.ria-minnesota.org>

## RIA Newsletter Autumn 2006

### President's Letter

*As another summer all-too-quickly draws to a close, I pause to take stock of the pluses and minuses of the season past, which includes some goodbyes to key members of the Rochester International Association Board. Earlier this summer, we said farewell to Curtis Schmelling, who with his wife Lawanna moved to the Twin Cities. For several years, Curt has done an excellent, responsible job as our RIA Treasurer--not to mention his other, myriad contributions--and he will be sorely missed. For the past three years, we of the RIA Board have also been privileged to work with Denise Stegall, who has applied her considerable energies and talents to being primary coordinator for the annual World Festival. Denise brings to all her pursuits a vivacity which volunteer organizations such as ours depend on to remain relevant and effective. Without Denise those festivals, and other RIA-sponsored events, would have been much less likely to have succeeded, or at least to have occurred with an essential modicum of logical planning. Though she has promised to do occasional "consulting" for us related to the Festival, it just won't be the same. It is with regret therefore that we wish her great success in her future Rochester-based endeavors. What these and other leave-takings remind us is that--not unlike many other volunteer-based community organizations--the RIA is dependent upon you our volunteers. If new active volunteers don't step forward every few years to help guide us through the old familiar challenges, plus develop new ones, then the chances diminish for us to continue serving the community via such events and activities as the World Festival, the monthly "Y" Lunches, international picnics, and other special gatherings. You needn't look into your soul to make a choice like this--Just your planner/calendar. Get in touch with us at the RIA today, and say "Yes--I can help!"*

*Sincerely,  
Frank Hawthorne*

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**The RIA begins a new year with many changes.** As a non-profit organization, the RIA's fiscal year begins July 1. That is why you are asked to join or renew your membership during the summer. Thanks to those of you who did mail your checks to the office. For those of you who have not taken this opportunity yet, please send your membership checks now. Mail them to RIA, or Rochester International Association, 300 NW 11th Ave. Rochester MN 55901.

Our website now has **email newsletter subscriptions**. Sign up at <http://ria-minnesota.org/email-subscriptions/> to stay informed with the latest news from RIA.

## NEWS

**RIA's new treasurer is Ann Lance.** As International Personnel Advisor at Mayo, Ann has been involved with RIA for many years as a member of the board. We thank her for taking on this important position. Curtis Schmelling (RIA's treasurer for the past three years) and his wife Lawanna have moved to Minneapolis. We thank him for his good service. Other leadership positions are open and a nominating committee is seeking interested and willing volunteers. Our administrative assistant Heidi Chaney is a continuing her studies at RCTC. She will remain on the board and help in the office when she is able.

**RCTC International Students:** Glen Saponari is the advisor to the group and is a member of the RIA Board. Students take an active role in the annual World Festival and other activities and programs. We encourage them to get involved with RIA. Each spring, the RIA also donates two International Scholarship Awards. These annual scholarships awarded to second-year international students who pursue higher education at RCTC. The award is based on academic record, financial need and participation in the community activities. Urath Tonphanith and Habiba Abdinur are the recipients for this past year.

**IMAA Intercultural Mutual Assistance Association** has hosted the RIA in its office for many years, providing office and storage space, mailing address and phone and computer access. We have appreciated this generous service as well as the friendships we have made with the staff members. Their growing immigrant staff and clients need more office space, so they are planning a move to new quarters early next year. They have asked RIA to stay associated with them and use their mailing address but will not be able to provide office and storage space. They plan to a volunteer office with computer access for the 2 new laptop computers that IBM has donated for use by RIA. RIA will rent storage space for the supplies and paper records we must keep.

**Diversity Council has moved** to a new office at the Northgate Shopping Center above the Hunan Garden restaurant. Go to [diversitycouncil.org](http://diversitycouncil.org) for information on upcoming activities on their online calendar.

## VOLUNTEERS NEEDED

**Join the RIA Board** to help plan and lead programs for this upcoming season. Board members are elected each September for a two-year term. The board members meet monthly to make decisions for RIA's future plans and activities. We welcome a diverse membership.

**World Festival Chairperson:** Denise Stegall was the very capable chairperson for the past three years, but is unable to serve again. We thank her. Her excellent planning notes as well as her advice to the next chair will still be available to whoever takes on this position. We also need a chair person to take charge of the children's program and to be the international food coordinator. The RIA needs many volunteers for the 31st Annual World Festival April 2007 to help plan and carry out this annual event. A date will be set soon. A planning committee is being formed from RIA board members and interested community members. Many new volunteers are needed to serve on the planning committee and to take part in the entertainment program, plan and/or cook ethnic foods, set up cultural displays, organize or teach games and art activities to children. Check the United Way website for RIA or call volunteer coordinator, Phyllis Layton 288-1197.

**A coordinator and arrangement team members** are needed for the monthly International lunch program at Y. Phyllis Layton will advise and assist. We welcome speakers to talk about their country, an international journey or other experience in the world at one of the luncheons this year. Call Phyllis at 288-1197 to volunteer.

**Its time to join or update your memberships** Thanks to those who have sent in new or renewed memberships. We hope you will renew your membership to the RIA (or join). If your ethnic group is active in the community, please let us know, so we can support you while you support us. A membership application is included on the back of this newsletter. Mail your application to RIA, 300 11th Ave. N.W., Suite 110, Rochester, MN 55901.

**There are many services available to you when you join the RIA.** The first service is a quarterly published newsletter. The newsletter provides news and information about RIA programs and multicultural events and activities in the community. The RIA also provides Resources and Referral Services. This includes information on multicultural events and opportunities. Our mission is to help new internationals get acquainted with our community, its members and resources. RIA members also receive discounts on Ethnic Dinner and RIA Events. These are available to all RIA members who make reservations or purchase advance-sale tickets to RIA-sponsored events.

## COMMUNITY EVENTS and INFORMATION

### **RIA Annual Meeting Tuesday, Sept 12, 7-9pm at the IMAA Board Room, 300 11th Ave NW**

The agenda will include election of the new Board Members; Annual reports for 05-06 year; Announcements and new business. All members and those interested in joining are invited to attend. You may join or renew your membership at the meeting.

**RIA's English Conversation Group** has met during the summer and will continue to meet each month usually on the third Friday morning at 10:00AM. Americans and internationals meet informally in homes or coffee shops for friendship, snacks and of course conversation. New internationals that wish to practice their English are especially welcome to join. Call Betsy 289-3359 for information.

**RIA's International Speakers Luncheons at the Rochester Family Y:** On the second Wednesday of each month everyone is welcome to come for lunch at the Y featuring an ethnic cuisine and cultural programs from 11:30-1:00 PM in Balfour Hall at the Rochester Area Family Y. Fred Regal prepares the ethnic lunches and speakers are invited to share their stories, travel pictures or other international themes. Cost for each luncheon will be \$8 for members of RIA. Visitors are welcome for \$9 or may join RIA at the luncheon. Speakers have a free lunch. Reservations are needed by Monday before each lunch. Call Betsy Munroe 289-3359 for a reservation. Volunteer helpers are also needed to set up and help with cleanup. Volunteer speakers for the remaining programs should contact Phyllis Layton 288-1197. Come to the lunch on **September 13** to hear from **soldiers from Colombia** who are currently in Rochester receiving medical treatment for their wounds caused by landmines placed in their country. You will be interested in their stories. Major Lopez Lautaro is their very able leader.

**Welcoming party for new Internationals at City Hall 7-9 pm Thursday, October 19:** Mayor Brede and the city's International Affairs Committee with the assistance of the RIA will provide the annual welcoming party with light refreshments and entertainment for new international residents and students. Please invite newcomers or bring them to City Hall for this annual event.

**Thanksgiving Dinner, Thursday Nov. 23:** This is a traditional American holiday dinner for new internationals is prepared and served to new international in Rochester each year since 1986 by Fred Regal in memory of his mother. It will be held once again at the Congregational Church 965 17th Ave. SW at noon. The event is donated by Fred Regal of Regal Catering. The RIA and the Mayor's International Affairs Committee co-sponsor and arrange for the event. Volunteer helpers are needed. Contact Herta Matteson.

**31st Rochester World Festival in April 2007:** Each April, the RIA plans and puts on the Rochester World Festival. This spring event is a community celebration in collaboration with the Mayor's International Affairs Committee, Rochester Community and Technical College, District #535 Community Education, the Affirmative Human Action Council, the Diversity Council and volunteers from ethnic and cultural groups in the area. Everyone is invited to take part. Festival activities include: an evening of dance and musical entertainment, Fashion Show of International Dress, Parade of Nations, Cultural Displays, Children's Activity Center, International Crafts Bazaar, Ethnic Food Tasting, and Demonstrations. Volunteers needed.

Rochester International Association  
300 N.W. 11th Ave., Suite 110  
Rochester, MN 55901  
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**President:** Frank Hawthorne

**Vice President:** Addie Borja

**Secretary:** Sue Shockey

**Treasurer:** Ann Lance

**Volunteer Coordinator:** Phyllis Layton

**Membership:** Binh and Thomas Yung

**Website Producer:** Thomas Yung

**Newsletter Editors:** Phyllis Layton,  
and Thomas Yung

**Board Members:** Denise Stegall, Phyllis Layton, George Margellos, Luna Mukherjee, Dottie Hawthorne, Marcella Nixon, Glen Saponari, Lee Herold, Heidy Chaney, Thomas Yung

**RIA's Office is at IMAA, 300 11th Ave. N.W. Suite 110, Rochester, MN 55901. 289-5960, Ext. 16**

RIA Board meets on the 2nd Tuesday of each month at 7 PM in the board room.

**Website:**  
[www.ria-minnesota.org](http://www.ria-minnesota.org)

**Membership...**

The Rochester International Association needs YOUR MEMBERSHIP.

RIA's membership year begins each July. We thank those who renewed this summer. New memberships are welcome at any time of the year.

You may also send an e-mail or call any of the board members. If you receive this newsletter and are not a member, please join now.

We hope you will become an active member of the RIA and volunteer for the upcoming World Festival.

**RIA MEMBERSHIP IS OPEN TO ALL PLEASE JOIN TODAY!**

RIA's office is at IMAA, 300 11th Ave. N.W. Suite 110, Rochester, MN 55901. RIA board meets on the 2nd Tuesday of each month at 7:00 PM in the board room. RIA's phone number is 289-5960. Leave a voice mail message.

**RIA's Mission: Celebrating cultural diversity and providing opportunities for multicultural education and exchange.** Membership is important and your way to help RIA put on the annual World Festival and other programs for international students and community.

Annual membership dues: Individual \$20 \_\_\_\_\_  
Student/Senior \$15 \_\_\_\_\_ Family \$30 (\$48 for 2 years) \_\_\_\_\_  
Organization \$30 \_\_\_\_\_ Business \$50 \_\_\_\_\_

Name or Names: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

phone: e-mail: \_\_\_\_\_

country/heritage: \_\_\_\_\_

Interest/talents you can share: \_\_\_\_\_

**Mail to: RIA, 300 11th Ave. N.W., Suite 110, Rochester, MN 55901**